



AMERICAN CUSTOMER SATISFACTION INDEX

E-GOVERNMENT SATISFACTION INDEX

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CITIZEN SATISFACTION RISES THIS QUARTER, BUT REMAINS AT A STANDSTILL YEAR-OVER-YEAR

Citizens are slightly more satisfied this quarter than last with federal government websites, according to the 4th quarter 2006 release of the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) E-Government Satisfaction Index. This quarterly report shows aggregate citizen satisfaction with the 87 measured websites at 73.9 on the ACSI's 100-point scale, up .3% from third quarter 2006.

This quarter's slight increase in aggregate citizen satisfaction continues a flattening trend over the past year. Typically, the ACSI E-Government Satisfaction Index has shown a steady, more pronounced year-over-year improvement in aggregate scores, proof that federal government websites have been able to stay ahead of citizens' evolving standards. This quarter, for the first time, the aggregate year-over-year satisfaction score is stagnant, with citizen satisfaction at the same level as it was in fourth quarter 2005.

This may be because citizens' standards for government websites continue to rise, shaped by the sum total of other websites they visit – from Amazon.com to their online banking site. While e-government sites have narrowed the gap between private sector sites in the Portals and News/Information categories, the public sector continues to lag significantly behind in E-Commerce/Transactions. This is important as many government sites are striving to migrate more business functions to the web, including distribution of forms, registration for services and email inquiries, among others.

Budgetary and resource constraints continue to be a daunting challenge faced by many government sites, while the election season has directed more scrutiny on the success of e-Government initiatives. The fact that the President's Management Agenda scorecard does not measure citizen satisfaction as part of its e-government criteria may mean that this critical success measure is not given as much attention as it should receive. It's important to focus on citizen satisfaction as it's one of the driving forces in e-government adoption and penetration.

Despite these challenges, 44% of sites in the index saw their satisfaction scores increase from last quarter, a number far greater than the 24% of sites whose scores declined. This is an impressive reversal from the previous quarter-over-quarter results, when only 25% of the sites experienced score increases, while 40% suffered declines.

The fourth quarter 2006 e-government aggregate score (73.9) is 2% higher than the offline ACSI government measure (72.3) this year, in spite of a 2% increase in the offline measure.

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The report looks at the 87 sites comprising the ACSI E-Government Satisfaction Index in two ways: functionally and by area of the government. Functionally, we've divided the sites into four categories based on the primary function of the site to parallel online private sector sites measured by the ACSI: portals/department main sites, information/news sites, e-commerce/transactional sites and career/recruitment sites.

We've also categorized sites into three groupings according to how they fall in the structure of government: department-level, agency-level and program sites. The more focused program sites significantly outperform the other two categories in terms of delivering a satisfying online experience.

THE ACSI METHODOLOGY

The ACSI E-Government Satisfaction Index is a special quarterly report of the ACSI, which is produced by the University of Michigan in partnership with the American Society for Quality (ASQ), ForeSee Results and the CFI Group. The ACSI is a cross-industry measure of offline customer satisfaction that measures the performance of approximately 200 private sector companies, as well as many government agencies. ForeSee Results collects and analyzes the data for the e-government websites included in the report.

ACSI e-government scores were calculated based on data gathered from voluntary online surveys of randomly selected site visitors. Each government website was rated by its visitors on various components of overall satisfaction. The ratings were converted to a score on a 100-point scale using the ACSI methodology.

The ACSI methodology identifies key drivers of satisfaction and quantifies their relationship to overall customer satisfaction. Going further, this cause-and-effect methodology predicts how customers will behave in the future and demonstrates the impact of website enhancements on customer satisfaction, customer behavior and ultimately, the bottom line.

COMPARISONS TO OTHER ACSI SCORES

The chart below shows how the aggregate e-government satisfaction score compares to the aggregate ACSI federal government benchmark, which is measured once yearly in the fourth quarter.

| Comparison of ACSI and Overall Government Scores | Q4 2005 | Q4 2006 | Year-over-Year Change |
|--|---------|---------|-----------------------|
| ACSI E-Government Aggregate | 73.9 | 73.9 | No change |
| ACSI Federal Government Scores | 71.3 | 72.3 | 1.4% |

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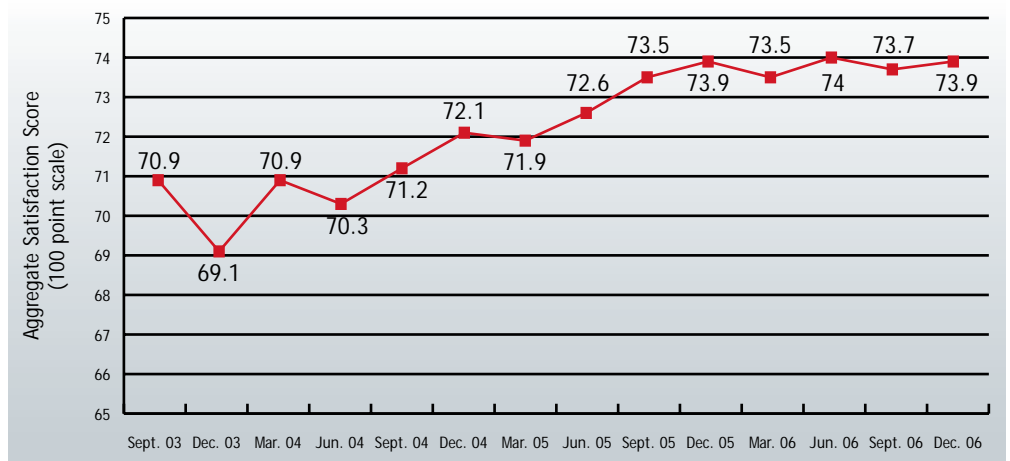
The chart below compares quarter-over-quarter e-government scores to the quarterly ACSI cross-industry index aggregate score. Note that the comparison period for the cross-industry ACSI score is different because the scores are published later than the e-government scores.

| Comparison of ACSI Aggregate and E-Government Scores | Q 3 2006 | Q4 2006 | Quarter-over-Quarter Change |
|--|----------|---------|-----------------------------|
| ACSI E-Government Aggregate | 73.7 | 73.9 | No change |
| | Q2 2006 | Q3 2006 | Quarter-over-Quarter Change |
| ACSI Aggregate (Cross-industry, offline and online) | 74.4 | 74.4 | No change |

The chart below shows that the aggregate score for e-government satisfaction continues to trail the most recent scores for e-commerce (online retail, travel, auction and brokerage) and e-business (news/information sites, search engines and portals) by a significant margin. Since citizens' perceptions and expectations are shaped by both government and private sector sites, it is important to benchmark these categories of government sites against their private sector "peers." The table below shows the comparison.

| Comparison of ACSI E-Government and Online Private Sector Scores | Aggregate Satisfaction Score |
|--|------------------------------|
| e-Government Q4 2006 | 73.9 |
| e-Business Q2 2006 | 77 |
| e-Commerce Q4 2005 | 80 |

The chart below shows the trend in citizen satisfaction with government websites since it was first measured on a quarterly basis using the ACSI methodology in third quarter 2003.



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WHERE TO FOCUS WEBSITE IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS

One of the things that makes the ACSI methodology unique is that it measures satisfaction with specific elements, or drivers, of the online experience, such as search, look and feel and content. The methodology also shows how improvements in specific drivers of satisfaction would positively impact satisfaction and future behaviors, such as return site visits.

Each quarter, we look at which elements are "top priority," meaning they were identified as the first or second-highest impact area for government websites. Search continues to be the top priority for the greatest number of sites (81% of those measured), not a surprise as it's a constant challenge for both public and private sector websites.

As more government sites begin to do business on the web, "tasks and transactions" becomes a key aspect of the website experience to measure. The element of tasks and transactions is top priority for 79% of the 14 sites measuring it, meaning that citizens would be more satisfied if they could complete online tasks more easily. This number is up from 72% last quarter, perhaps reflecting citizens' increasing view of the web as a transactional tool, not just an informational vehicle.

While satisfaction scores for the various elements have changed very little since last quarter, their priority status has fluctuated quite a bit. Image, which looks at how trustworthy and established the site is and how much it values visitors, is top priority for 56% of the sites that measure it, up from 44% last quarter. Over the last few quarters, we've also seen a lot of movement in the priority of look and feel, which this quarter is top priority for 28% of sites, up from 19% from last quarter.

UPWARD TREND IN USE OF GOVERNMENT WEBSITES AS A PRIMARY RESOURCE

Citizen satisfaction as measured by the ACSI methodology drives desired future behaviors. For the ACSI E-Government Satisfaction Index, we measure three future behaviors: likelihood to return to the site, likelihood to recommend the site and likelihood to use the site as a primary resource. While both "return" and "recommend" have stayed flat from last quarter with respective scores of 83 and 79, likelihood to use the site as a primary resource has risen for the third quarter in a row, from a 75 to 76.

Depending on the type of site, citizens could alternately access information offline (e.g., someone contacting the IRS could also do so by phone or mail) or via other online sources (e.g., someone searching for information on MedlinePlus could also look on WebMD). The fact that the score for this future behavior has trended upward speaks positively of citizens' increasing use of government websites as primary sources of information. This enables government to meet citizens' needs more cost-efficiently, consistently and promptly than most of the other available channels.

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TOP-PERFORMING SITES SET STANDARDS FOR E-GOVERNMENT

This quarter, we classified 18 sites (21% of the total) as “top performers,” meaning that they have scores of 80 or higher. The average satisfaction score for these high-performing sites is almost 12% higher than the index average and a full 25% higher than the “bottom performing” group of sites with scores of 70 or less. The Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation’s MyPBA site (<https://egov.pbgc.gov/mypba>) is new to the index this quarter and becomes part of the top-performing group with a score of 80.

| E-Government US Agency/Department/Office | Website | 12/06 Score |
|---|---|-------------|
| Social Security Administration | Internet Social Security Benefits Application https://s044a90.ssa.gov/apps6a/ISBA/main.html | 88 |
| Social Security Administration | Help with Medicare Prescription Drug Plan Costs https://s044a90.ssa.gov/apps6z/i1020/main.html | 87 |
| National Library of Medicine, National Institutes of Health, HHS | MedlinePlus— http://medlineplus.gov | 86 |
| National Library of Medicine, National Institutes of Health, HHS | MedlinePlus en español http://medlineplus.gov/esp/ | 84 |
| National Library of Medicine, National Institutes of Health, HHS | AIDSinfo— http://aidsinfo.nih.gov/ | 84 |
| National Institute of Diabetes & Digestive & Kidney Diseases, National Institutes of Health, HHS | NIDDK Clearinghouses— http://www.niddk.nih.gov | 84 |
| National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute, National Institutes of Health, HHS | NHLBI main website— http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov | 83 |
| National Cancer Institute, National Institutes of Health, HHS | National Cancer Institute Site en Español www.cancer.gov/espanol www.cancer.gov/espanol | 83 |
| OSE Curriculum Supplements | Office of Science Education, National Institutes of Health, HHS | 83 |
| Social Security Administration | Social Security Business Services Online http://www.ssa.gov/bsowelcome.htm | 82 |
| National Cancer Institute, National Institutes of Health, HHS | National Cancer Institute main website www.cancer.gov | 82 |
| United States Mint, Treasury | Online Catalog— http://catalog.usmint.gov | 82 |
| Office of Science Education, National Institutes of Health, HHS | Office of Science Education website http://science.education.nih.gov | 82 |
| General Services Administration | Federal Citizen Information Center www.pueblo.gsa.gov/ | 80 |
| Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation | MyPBA— https://egov.pbgc.gov/mypba | 80 |
| Central Intelligence Agency | Recruitment website http://www.cia.gov/employment | 80 |
| Department of Education | Free Application for Federal Student Aid - FAFSA website— www.fafsa.ed.gov | 80 |
| National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases, National Institutes of Health, HHS | NIAMS Public Website http://www.niams.nih.gov/index.htm | 80 |

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As a result of higher satisfaction, top performing sites are far more likely to engender desired future behaviors. On average, the Likelihood to Recommend score for the group of sites with scores of 80 or higher is 18% above the average score for sites scoring 70 or below. Likewise, the top performing sites' Likelihood to Return score is 11% higher. The gap between top and bottom performing sites is less on the third future behavior, Likelihood to Use the Site as a Primary Resource, where the group of top performing sites has an aggregate score that is 9.5% higher. Top performers are making strides in this critical area, as evidenced by a two-point increase in the score for this future behavior since the last measurement.

Continuous improvement is the key to remaining a top-performing site and reaping the benefits in terms of fostering desired future behaviors. It's encouraging to note that 45% of the sites in the low performing group with scores of 70 or below have improved since they have been measured. Of these sites, six had satisfaction gains of three points or more since last quarter. On the other end of the spectrum, 24% of top performing sites have seen their scores fall from last quarter, a warning that top performing sites cannot be content to "rest on their laurels."

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION BY FUNCTIONAL CATEGORIES

The table below shows how satisfied citizens are, on aggregate, with each of the four types of measured sites as categorized on a functional basis. The table below shows quarter-over-quarter and year-over-year changes in scores for each category.

| Category | Q4 2006 | Q3 2006 | Quarter over Quarter % Change | Q4 2005 | Year over Year % Change |
|-------------------------------|---------|---------|-------------------------------|---------|-------------------------|
| Portals/Department Main Sites | 74.9 | 74.8 | 0.1% | 74.2 | 1.0% |
| News/Information | 72.9 | 72.7 | 0.3% | 73.3 | -0.5% |
| E-commerce/Transactions | 74.5 | 74.5 | none | 75.3 | -1.3% |
| Recruitment/Careers | 77.2 | 77.2 | None | 76.0 | 1.6% |

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Portals/Department Main Sites

The average satisfaction score for the 21 sites in this category is 74.9, a mere .1% increase from last quarter. Year-over-year, the aggregate score for portals/department main sites has risen 1%. Government portals are closing in on the private sector ACSI portal score of 76, trailing it by just 1.4%. More than 50% of portals have higher scores this year than last, while only 12% have seen declines in their scores.

| E-Government | | 12/06 Score |
|---|--|--------------------|
| US Agency/Department/Office | Website | |
| Portal/Dept. Main Site | | |
| National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute, National Institutes of Health, HHS | NHLBI main website— http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov | 83 |
| National Cancer Institute, National Institutes of Health, HHS | National Cancer Institute main website— www.cancer.gov | 82 |
| Office of Science Education, National Institutes of Health, HHS | Office of Science Education website http://science.education.nih.gov | 82 |
| National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases, National Institutes of Health, HHS | NIAMS Public Website— http://www.niams.nih.gov/index.htm | 80 |
| National Aeronautics and Space Administration | NASA main website— www.nasa.gov | 79 |
| General Services Administration | FirstGov.gov website (Spanish) http://firstgov.gov/Espanol/index.shtml | 79 |
| United States Mint, Treasury | U.S. Mint main website— www.usmint.gov | 78 |
| National Parks Service, Interior | National Parks Service main website— www.nps.gov | 77 |
| Centers for Disease Control and Prevention | CDC main website— www.cdc.gov | 76 |
| National Library of Medicine, HHS | NLM main website— www.nlm.nih.gov | 76 |
| U.S. Small Business Administration | SBA main website— www.sba.gov | 75 |
| Government Accountability Office | GAO main public website— www.gao.gov | 74 |
| Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation | FDIC main website— www.fdic.gov | 72 |
| Social Security Administration | Social Security Online (Main Website)— www.socialsecurity.gov/ | 72 |
| Internal Revenue Service, Treasury | IRS main website— www.irs.gov | 71 |
| Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, HHS | SAMHSA website— www.samhsa.gov | 71 |
| Department of the Treasury | Treasury main website— www.treasury.gov | 71 |
| General Services Administration | GSA main website— www.gsa.gov | 71 |
| United States Department of Agriculture | USDA mainsite— www.usda.gov | 70 |
| Department of State | Department of State main website— www.state.gov | 70 |
| National Archives & Records Administration | NARA main public website— www.archives.gov | 69 |

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Scores in this category range from 69 to 83, with the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute's main website, <http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov>, leading or tying for first place in the category for the sixth quarter in a row. The National Cancer Institute's main website (www.cancer.gov) and the Office of Science Education website (<http://science.education.nih.gov>) follow closely with scores of 82.

A number of sites have seen significant score increases, both from last quarter and from one year ago:

- Two sites affiliated with the Department of Treasury, www.usmint.gov and www.irs.gov, have seen year-over-year score increases of four and three points, respectively. The score for the main website of the General Services Administration, www.gsa.gov, has increased four points since last year, three points just since last quarter based on some ongoing changes to different aspects of the site, including events, the staff directory, the forms library and the advanced search function.

Search is top priority for 80% of sites in the portal/department main site category, although this percentage has decreased over the past few quarters. Functionality, Look and Feel and Navigation are also elements of prime importance for a large percentage of sites.

News/Information Sites

The 47 sites in this largest category have an aggregate satisfaction score of 72.9, which is a .3% increase from last quarter and a .5% increase from one year ago. Not surprising given the relative flatness of these increases, an almost equal number of sites had score increases as those that saw their scores decline from last year; 42% vs. 41%. Even though the gains are incremental at this point, satisfaction with e-government news/information sites is almost on par with their private sectors peers, whose satisfaction score dropped 2.7% last year to 73.

| E-Government US Agency/Department/Office | Website | 12/06 Score |
|---|--|----------------|
| News/Information | | |
| National Library of Medicine, National Institutes of Health, HHS | MedlinePlus— http://medlineplus.gov | 86 |
| National Library of Medicine, National Institutes of Health, HHS | MedlinePlus en español— http://medlineplus.gov/esp/ | 84 |
| National Library of Medicine, National Institutes of Health, HHS | AIDSinfo— http://aidsinfo.nih.gov/ | 84 |
| National Institute of Diabetes & Digestive & Kidney Diseases, National Institutes of Health, HHS | NIDDK Clearinghouses— http://www.niddk.nih.gov | 84 |
| National Cancer Institute, National Institutes of Health, HHS | National Cancer Institute Site en Español www.cancer.gov/espanol www.cancer.gov/ | 83 |

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| E-Government US Agency/Department/Office | Website | 12/06 Score |
|---|--|----------------|
| OSE Curriculum Supplements | Office of Science Education, National Institutes of Health, HHS http://science.education.nih.gov/supplements | 83 |
| General Services Administration | Federal Citizen Information Center— www.pueblo.gsa.gov/ | 80 |
| Department of Education | Free Application for Federal Student Aid—FAFSA website www.fafsa.ed.gov | 80 |
| National Archives & Records Administration | NARA Presidential Library websites http://archives.gov/presidential_libraries/index.html | 79 |
| Bureau of Labor Statistics | BLS Occupational Outlook Handbook— http://www.bls.gov/oco/ | 79 |
| Office on Women's Health | National Women's Health Information Center (NWHIC) main website— www.4woman.gov | 79 |
| NIH Senior Health, National Institutes of Health, HHS | NIH Senior Health— http://nihseniorhealth.gov | 79 |
| Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, State | State Alumni website— https://alumni.state.gov | 78 |
| Department of Justice | President's DNA Initiative— http://www.dna.gov | 78 |
| National Library of Medicine, National Institutes of Health, HHS | TOXNET— http://toxnet.nlm.nih.gov | 78 |
| National Criminal Justice Reference Service, Justice | NCJRS website— www.ncjrs.gov | 76 |
| Center for Nutrition Policy Promotion, Agriculture | MyPyramid Website— www.MyPyramid.gov | 76 |
| Small Business Administration | SBA Business.gov— www.business.gov | 75 |
| General Services Administration | Consumer Action Website, Federal Citizen Information Center http://www.consumeraction.gov | 75 |
| U.S. Department of Commerce | National Geodetic Society, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration website— http://www.ngs.noaa.gov/ | 75 |
| Social Security Administration | Social Security Online: Answers to Your Questions http://ssa-custhelp.ssa.gov | 73 |
| Office for Victims of Crime, Department of Justice | OVC website— www.ovc.gov | 73 |
| Foreign Agricultural Service, Agriculture | FAS main website— www.fas.usda.gov | 73 |
| National Institute of Justice, Justice | NIJ main website— http://www.ojp.gov/nij | 73 |
| Department of State | U.S. Department of State Education USA http://educationusa.state.gov | 72 |
| Agency for Healthcare Research & Quality, HHS | Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality— www.ahrq.gov | 72 |
| Economic Research Service, Agriculture | ERS main website— www.ers.usda.gov | 72 |
| Office of Research Facilities, National Institutes of Health, HHS | NIH Office of Research Facilities website http://orf.od.nih.gov | 71 |
| Department of State | Student website— http://future.state.gov | 71 |

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| E-Government US Agency/Department/Office | Website | 12/06 Score |
|--|--|----------------|
| International Information Programs, State | IIP main website— http://usinfo.state.gov | 71 |
| Bureau of Cultural Affairs, State | Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs website http://exchanges.state.gov/ | 70 |
| National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders, National Institutes of Health, HHS | NIH Stem Cell Information— http://stemcells.nih.gov | 70 |
| U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission | U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission website— www.nrc.gov | 70 |
| Food Safety and Inspection Service, Agriculture | FSIS main website— www.fsis.usda.gov | 69 |
| Bureau of Economic Analysis, Commerce | BEA main website— http://www.bea.gov | 68 |
| Risk Management Agency, Agriculture | RMA website— www.rma.usda.gov | 68 |
| National Agricultural Library, Agriculture | NAL main website— www.nal.usda.gov | 67 |
| Department of the Treasury, Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau | USTTB website— www.ttb.gov | 67 |
| Federal Emergency Management Agency, Homeland Security | FEMA Map Service Center— http://store.msc.fema.gov | 66 |
| Financial Management Service, Treasury | Financial Management Service— www.fms.treas.gov | 66 |
| U.S. Food and Drug Administration, HHS | FDA main website— www.fda.gov | 66 |
| Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service, Agriculture | CSREES main website— www.csrees.usda.gov | 65 |
| Forest Service, Agriculture | Forest Service main website— http://www.fs.fed.us | 65 |
| Natural Resources Conservation Service, Agriculture | NRCS website— http://www.nrcs.usda.gov | 62 |
| National Archives & Records Administration | NARA AAD - Access to Archival Databases www.archives.gov/aad/index.html | 61 |
| General Services Administration | GSA E-Library http://www.gsaelibrary.gsa.gov/ElibMain/ElibHome | 60 |
| Military Health System, Defense | TRICARE— www.tricare.osd.mil/ | 60 |

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Several sites saw significant increases in their scores from last quarter:

- The USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service main website (www.fas.usda.gov) went up five points after the site conducted a major redesign.
- Since last quarter, the satisfaction score for the General Services Administration's e-Library site (<http://www.gsa.eLibrary.gsa.gov/ElibMain/ElibHome>) has gone up four points based on a continued focus on minor refinements and additions to the site.

Three sites had increases of six points or more since last year, which is an impressive gain even over the longer period of time. Change often happens gradually on government websites. Even when sites conduct comprehensive redesigns, they often don't see the full effect of the improvements for months.

- The Department of the Treasury, Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau's website (www.ttb.gov), increased four points from last quarter following an August redesign of the site to better serve four major audience groups. The Department made a number of changes to site organization and navigation based on "voice of customer" input, which it explains on its website at http://ttb.gov/announcements/072806_ttb_newlook_announce.shtml.

This four-point increase since last quarter for the Department of Treasury, Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau's website is part of a significant, longer-term increase in citizen satisfaction with the site. Since fourth quarter of last year, citizen satisfaction with www.ttb.gov has risen 13 points following a series of improvements throughout the year.

- The score for the National Archives and Records Administration's Access to Archival Databases (www.archives.gov/aad/index.html), has gone up seven points since last year, while AIDSInfo (<http://aidsinfo.nih.gov/>) has seen its score rise six points year-over-year based on navigational changes, posting of current information and AIDS awareness campaigns that drive people to the site.
- Scores in fourth quarter 2006 range from 60 to 86. MedlinePlus, with a score of 86, has the highest score, making this the fifth quarter in a row where this site has led or tied the category for the highest score. Three sites have a score of 84: MedlinePlus en español (<http://medlineplus.gov/esp/>), AIDSinfo (<http://aidsinfo.nih.gov/>) and the National Institute of Diabetes & Digestive & Kidney Diseases site (<http://www.niddk.nih.gov>).

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Search is a high priority for 83% of news/information sites, while Functionality, Look and Feel and Tasks/Transactions (for sites that measure it) are also important.





E-Commerce/Transactional Sites

The 14 sites in this category have an average satisfaction score of 74.5, unchanged from last quarter. This score is actually a 1% decrease from the average e-commerce/transactional site score from fourth quarter 2005. An equal number of sites, 40%, increased and decreased in score from last year.

Compared to last year's strong private sector e-commerce performance, with a score of 80, this government category has a fairly long way to go to catch up to its private sector peers.

| e-Commerce/Transaction | Website | 12/06 Score |
|---|--|-------------|
| Social Security Administration | Internet Social Security Benefits Application https://s044a90.ssa.gov/apps6a/ISBA/main.html | 88 |
| Social Security Administration | Help with Medicare Prescription Drug Plan Costs https://s044a90.ssa.gov/apps6z/i1020/main.html | 87 |
| Social Security Administration | Social Security Business Services Online http://www.ssa.gov/bsowelcome.htm | 82 |
| United States Mint, Treasury | Online Catalog— http://catalog.usmint.gov | 82 |
| Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation | MyPBA— https://egov.pbgc.gov/mypba | 80 |
| SSA Retirement Planner | Social Security Retirement Planner www.socialsecurity.gov/r&m1.htm | 76 |
| General Services Administration | GSA Global Supply website— https://www.globalsupply.gsa.gov | 74 |
| Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation | MyPAA— https://egov.pbgc.gov/mypaa | 73 |
| Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation | PBGC main website— www.pbgc.gov | 73 |
| Social Security Administration | Social Security Internet Disability Report http://www.ssa.gov/applyfordisability/ | 71 |
| General Services Administration | GSA Advantage website— https://www.gsaadvantage.gov | 69 |
| General Services Administration | GSA E-Buy— http://www.ebuy.gsa.gov | 68 |
| Department of the Treasury, Bureau of the Public Debt | TreasuryDirect— www.treasurydirect.gov | 63 |
| General Services Administration | USDA Advantage— http://www.usdaadvantage.gsa.gov | 58 |

Scores in this category range from 58 to 88, with the Social Security Administration's Internet Social Security Benefits Application (<https://s044a90.ssa.gov/apps6a/ISBA/main.html>). This is the sixth quarter that this site's score has led or tied the category. Another Social Security Administration site, Help with Medicare Prescription Drug Plan Costs (<https://s044a90.ssa.gov/apps6z/i1020/main.html>) has the second highest score in the category: 87.

Improvements to search will positively affect satisfaction and future behaviors a large percentage of sites in the e-commerce/transactional category, as it's a top priority element for 88% of sites, even as satisfaction with Search increased two points from last quarter. Tasks/Transactions, measured for eight of the fourteen of sites in this category, is top priority for 75% of e-commerce/transactional sites.

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Sites with significant satisfaction increases included:

- The satisfaction score for the main website for the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation (www.pbgc.gov) has risen eight points from fourth quarter 2005 based on a site redesign in August 2005.
- The U.S. Mint's Catalog site (<http://catalog.usmint.gov>) has experienced a year-over-year score increase of five points.
- The score for the General Services Administration's Global Supply site (<https://www.gsaglobalsupply.gsa.gov>) has increased three points from third quarter 2006.

Career/Recruitment Sites

The five sites in this category have a score of 77.2, which matches last quarter's. The aggregate score for this small category has risen 1.6% since fourth quarter 2005.

| E-Government | | 12/06 |
|--|--|-------|
| US Agency/Department/Office | Website | Score |
| Career/Recruitment | | |
| Military Community and Family Policy Office, Defense | Military Spouse Career Center http://www.military.com/spouse/ | 79 |
| Department of Labor | Department of Labor Job Listings— www.doors.dol.gov | 75 |
| Central Intelligence Agency | Recruitment website— http://www.cia.gov/employment | 80 |
| Office of Personnel Management | Recruitment website— www.usajobs.opm.gov | 77 |
| Department of State | Recruitment website— www.careers.state.gov | 76 |

Scores range from 75 to 80, with the Central Intelligence Agency's Recruitment website (<http://www.cia.gov/employment>) leading the category with a score of 80.

Navigation is a top priority element for all recruitment/careers sites. Job Search is a top priority element for 40% of these sites, suggesting that citizens would prefer to search for jobs by browsing through menu options as opposed to a specific search.

MORE FOCUSED SITES DO BETTER JOB OF SATISFYING CITIZENS

In addition to looking at sites by the four functional categories, we also analyzed customer satisfaction data once again by three categories that match the way the federal government is structured: department sites (which includes independent agencies, corporations, administrations, etc.) agency sites (all entities that fall directly below a department or equivalent organization) and program sites (all others).

Once again, program sites, which often contain content and functionality that is more limited and specific than department and agency sites, significantly outperformed the other two categories with an aggregate citizen satisfaction score of 78.9. The category of program sites has both the highest aggregate score and the largest increase in aggregate score from last quarter: almost 5%. The insight here is that by narrowing the scope of a website's function or audiences, it is considerably easier to tailor the website to users' needs and expectations.

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The table below shows how aggregate citizen satisfaction with each of the three categories and provides a comparison to last quarter:

| | Q4 2006 | Q3 2006 | % Change |
|------------------|---------|---------|----------|
| Department Sites | 71.9 | 72.0 | -0.1% |
| Agency Sites | 72.5 | 71.1 | 2.0% |
| Program Sites | 75.2 | 78.9 | 4.9% |

Department Sites

The table below shows the satisfaction scores for the 12 department and department-level sites included in the benchmark:

| Department | Website | 12/06 Score |
|---|---|-------------|
| National Aeronautics and Space Administration | NASA main website— www.nasa.gov | 79 |
| U.S. Small Business Administration | SBA main website— www.sba.gov | 75 |
| Government Accountability Office | GAO main public website— www.gao.gov | 74 |
| Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation | PBGC main website— www.pbgc.gov | 73 |
| Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation | FDIC main website— www.fdic.gov | 72 |
| Social Security Administration | Social Security Online (Main Website)— www.socialsecurity.gov/ | 72 |
| Department of the Treasury | Treasury main website— www.treasury.gov | 71 |
| General Services Administration | GSA main website— www.gsa.gov | 71 |
| United States Department of Agriculture | USDA mainsite— www.usda.gov | 70 |
| U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission | U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission website— www.nrc.gov | 70 |
| Department of State | Department of State main website— www.state.gov | 70 |
| National Archives & Records Administration | NARA main public website— www.archives.gov | 69 |

The aggregate satisfaction score for these sites is 73.9, up from 72 last quarter. The main NASA site, www.nasa.gov, with a score of 79, is the only department-level site to have a score over 75. Department sites lag the other two categories with their scores for Likelihood to Return (82) and Likelihood to Recommend (77). For many sites, the Likelihood to Recommend score is much higher than the satisfaction score, which suggests that citizens accessing the sites feel a lack of choice. Even if they're not satisfied with the department site, they feel they don't have any better options for obtaining information about that department.

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Agency Sites

The aggregate score for agency sites is up 2% from last quarter to a score of 72.5. As with department sites, the high Likelihood to Return scores of large number of these sites (80 or higher for many) may show some limitation of choice. While citizens aren't as satisfied as they could be with agency-level sites, they may not feel they have other options for finding information about, or interacting with, the agency.

Program Sites

Many program sites have a more focused function and audiences than department or agency sites. For that reason, it may be easier for these sites to satisfy citizens. The aggregate citizen satisfaction score for program sites is 78.9, a 5% increase from last quarter, but 8.8% higher than the aggregate score for the agency grouping and 9.7% higher than for department sites. As a result of higher satisfaction, program sites surpass the other two categories in terms of both measured future behaviors.

The program category's Likelihood to Return score of 86 tops the agency score by three points and the aggregate department score by four. Program sites outperform the other two groups of sites even more dramatically in Likelihood to Recommend, where the aggregate program score of 83 compares quite favorably to the aggregate agency score of 78 for agencies and 77 for departments. (This future behavior is not measured by departments). There's a three-point difference between the aggregate score of program sites of 78 for Likelihood to Use the Site as a Primary Resource and the agency score of 75.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES TOPS DEPARTMENT RANKINGS

This quarter, the Department of Health and Human Services, with a score of 78.8, leads the aggregate rankings of departments with five or more sites in the index. Health and Human Services is followed closely by the Social Security Administration, with an aggregate score of 78.4

| Department | Aggregate 12/06 Score |
|---|-----------------------|
| Department of Health and Human Services | 78.8 |
| Social Security Administration | 78.4 |
| Department of State | 72.4 |
| Department of Treasury | 71.1 |
| General Services Administration | 70.6 |
| Department of Agriculture | 68.5 |

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SITES TARGETING LATINO AUDIENCE SUCCEED IN SATISFYING CITIZENS

The Latino population in the United States has is growing at record rates, and the U.S. government is increasingly serving this important audience online. The index contains three Spanish-language sites: MedlinePlus (<http://medlineplus.gov/esp/>), FirstGov (<http://firstgov.gov/Espanol/index.shtml>) and the National Cancer Institute (www.cancer.gov/espanol/www.cancer.gov/espanol). These three sites had an average score of 80, well above the index average score of 73.9.

CONCLUSION

Federal government websites must constantly monitor citizen satisfaction as a means of obtaining citizen-guided input into how to enhance their websites to meet citizens' evolving needs. Sites that respond to citizens' changing needs are typically rewarded with high citizen satisfaction scores, which drive other goals to become more cost-efficient, to provide better access and to improve the consistency and quality of service to citizens. Those that cannot keep pace with their users have a harder time of changing citizen's behavior.

The sites with the biggest year-over-year increases in satisfaction often engaged in redesign of their websites based on voice of citizen data gathered through the ACSI methodology. The tightening of e-government budgets over the past year has made it harder to undertake wholesale site redesigns, which can be an expensive proposition.

While aggregate citizen satisfaction rose slightly this quarter for the measured federal government websites, it has stalled from one year ago. The challenge to do more with less is a constant on the e-government horizon and the private sector continues to set the bar for citizen expectations of website experiences. It will be interesting to see what happens in 2007 and whether this trend of stagnating satisfaction will continue or whether it will be reversed. The best way to foster adoption and penetration of e-government is to make customer satisfaction the key performance metric for evaluating e-government initiatives.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Larry Freed is an expert on Web Effectiveness and Web Customer Satisfaction. He is also President and CEO of ForeSee Results, a market leader in customer satisfaction measurement on the web, which utilizes the methodology of the American Customer Satisfaction Index.

ABOUT THE ACSI

The American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) is the only uniform, national, cross-industry measure of satisfaction with the quality of goods and services available in the United States. In 1999, the Federal government selected the ACSI to be a standard metric for measuring citizen satisfaction. Over 100 Federal government agencies have used the ACSI to measure citizen satisfaction of more than 200 services and programs. The Index is produced by the University of Michigan, in partnership with the American Society for Quality (ASQ) and CFI Group, an international consulting firm. ForeSee Results sponsors the e-commerce, e-business and e-government indices.

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ABOUT FORESEE RESULTS, INC.

ForeSee Results is the market leader in online customer satisfaction measurement and management and specializing in converting satisfaction data into user-driven web development strategies. Using the methodology of the University of Michigan's American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI), ForeSee Results has created a model that scientifically quantifies the elements that drive online customer satisfaction and predicts future behaviors, including the likelihood to return to the site or recommend the site to others. ForeSee Results, a privately held company located in Ann Arbor, Michigan, can be found online at www.ForeSeeResults.com.

ABOUT THE FEDERAL CONSULTING GROUP

The Federal Consulting Group, a franchise of the Department of the Treasury, serves as the executive agent in the government for the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI), and holds generic clearance from the Office of Management and Budget that enables agencies to utilize the ACSI without having to obtain a separate clearance under the Paperwork Reduction Act to conduct customer satisfaction surveys. Agencies can participate in the ACSI through an arrangement between the Federal Consulting Group and ForeSee Results.

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